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**ESTIMATION OF THE ECONOMIC LOSS CAUSED BY NEEDLESTICK INJURIES IN TAIWAN HEALTHCARE WORKERS.**Tzu Yin Chen, Judith SC Shiao, Yue Leon Guo, Yi Chia Lin *NTU, Taipei, Taiwan*

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**Objectives** To estimate the economic loss caused by needlestick injuries (NSI) and the medical cost of post NSIs including testing, post exposure prophylaxis and treatments in Taiwan healthcare workers (HCWs).

**Methods** Data were collected by Chinese EPINet (Exposure Prevention Information Network). We calculated the medical costs (test, prophylaxis and long-term treatment) for HBV, HCV and HIV among HCWs after an NSI. Cost estimation was performed using Microsoft Excel 2007.

**Results** A total of 200 hospitals employing 89 426 HCWs participated in Chinese EPINet and 4400 NSIs were reported between 2004 and 2010. The annual number of NSIs was estimated to be 8641 per year in Taiwan. The total medical cost was 51.5 million dollars, of which 38.1 million dollars (74%) were due to medical tests and prophylaxis after exposure, and

13.4 million dollars (26%) were spent on long-term treatment in case of seroconversion.

**Conclusions** This study estimated the annual “direct cost” of NSIs reported in Taiwan, regardless of underreporting rate and “indirect cost” of NSIs such as psychosocial impact on HCWs. We therefore recommend that hospital administrators should seriously consider purchasing safer medical devices for preventing NSIs rather than spending money on post exposure management and treatment.